

## The Sun.

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If our friends who favor us with manuscripts for publication wish to have their articles returned, they must in all cases send stamps for that purpose.

## Panama?

If the representatives of the French shareholders really desire to obtain from Congress consideration of a reasonable proposition to sell out to this Government, and if they have an attractive proposition to offer, the swiftest ship that crosses the Atlantic is none too fast for their service at this time.

Perhaps the last opportunity of Panama has already gone. Certain it is that with every week and day it is going.

Monsieur HUTIN as a negotiator was too slow or too timid or too much hampered by the people behind him. The only move that can now gain a hearing for the Panama route must be nothing short of Napoleonic in conception and execution.

## The End.

Death could not have caused the peculiar pathos of this note, which calls for no explanation of its origin:

"WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 28, 1901.  
 "MY DEAR MR. WHEELER: Adeline Sampson is too ill to really understand your most kind letter, just received, but if he were well he would thank you for it, he cares so much for 'old times' and for anything that concerns Palmyra."  
 "My dear husband is quite worn out with a long illness, and is very frail. Physically he is comfortable and happy, but the brain is tired beyond ever being rested. Sincerely,  
 "ELIZABETH DORLING SAMPSON."

The wrong, cruel, bitter and intense, which has been done to WILLIAM T. SAMPSON is now beyond reparation. The commander of the American fleet throughout a war that ended in our complete and momentous triumph, has lived without a shred of the honors that traditionally follow faithful and successful service, until he has passed beyond their reach for all time. If Congress were to-day to load Rear Admiral SAMPSON with rank and thanks, they would be empty, for he has lost the power to accept them. And to this he has been brought, not by the inevitable force of age, but by abuse such as we have not known equalled in all the annals of political controversy.

Savage and fatal as this outrage has been, it was founded upon feeling that was simply childish in its illogicality. The offenses for which SAMPSON has been made to suffer in this extreme manner, in so far as they could be formulated, consisted in the wording of his despatch announcing the victory of Santiago and in his describing, in a letter to the Secretary of the Navy, the conduct of a subordinate, Commodore SAMPSON, as "repensible"—a criticism which a court of inquiry consisting of three high Admirals have virtually declared to have been merited to the full.

GEORGE DEWEY, the commander of an squadron of the fleet, whose operations were great politically, but insignificant upon the actual war, was made Admiral. But SAMPSON, the commander of the fleet upon whose operations the actual triumph of the American arms over Spain was based, is rewarded with every circumstance of popular insult. And finally the same DEWEY aims an uncalled-for blow at him, forbidden, under the attending circumstances, by the simplest laws of good faith.

Throughout the progress of this tragedy however, SAMPSON has had one immeasurable and irreparable satisfaction. His Commander-in-Chief, President McKinley, and his more immediate superior, the Secretary of the Navy, honored him and spared no effort to obtain for him his desert. And his subordinates, the men of his fleet, particularly those who commanded and fought at Santiago, hailed him ever with an almost passionate affection and respect. At this moment we can think of nothing so humiliating to this country, so shocking to the sense of justice, as the closing years of the career of Rear Admiral SAMPSON.

## The Purchase of Commissions in the British Army.

It will be remembered by readers of "Vanity Fair" that old Osborne left by will to Major Dobson "such a sum as may be sufficient to purchase his commission as a Lieutenant-Colonel," and that Major Dobson and Capt. MacMunn attained their promotion slowly, by seniority and not by purchase.

It is just thirty years since Queen Victoria abolished the long-existing system of purchase, making use of a royal warrant to do so after the House of Lords had refused to consider the bill abolishing the practice. The Queen's action gave rise to much ill feeling in both House of Parliament and there was some excited talk of impeaching Mr. Gladstone, who was Premier and therefore the responsible Minister. The matter rapidly dropped out of mind, however, and nothing beyond a vote of censure on the Prime Minister by the House ever came of it.

Now, after thirty years, the English are taking stock of their active officers, and of all who command cavalry regiments and infantry battalions. They find one cavalryman and fourteen infantrymen still on the active list, who brought their original commissions under the system which had produced General Osborne, William Pitt, Lord Palmerston and other famous officers.

The purchase system grew out of the manner in which the British Army had been raised originally. A regimental commander would contract to maintain his regiment for a certain term, making what he could out of this, and out of the sale of commissions. The system was

permitted by CHARLES II., but forbidden by WILLIAM III.; in 1703, however, it was recognized by a judicial decision, holding an officer liable to pay £600 for his promotion to Captain. Later various royal commissions investigated the matter, with especial reference to the "over-regulation" payments, which often exceeded the prices fixed by law. In 1708 Lord Ligonier's commission was reported that the regulation price for a Lieutenant was £400; for a Lieutenant-Colonel, £600; for a Major-General, £1,000; for a Colonel, £1,200; for a Major-General, £1,400; for a Lieutenant-General, £1,600; for a Colonel-General, £1,800; for a Major-General, £2,000; for a Lieutenant-General, £2,200; for a Colonel-General, £2,400; for a Major-General, £2,600; for a Lieutenant-General, £2,800; for a Colonel-General, £3,000; for a Major-General, £3,200; for a Lieutenant-General, £3,400; for a Colonel-General, £3,600; for a Major-General, £3,800; for a Lieutenant-General, £4,000; for a Colonel-General, £4,200; for a Major-General, £4,400; for a Lieutenant-General, £4,600; for a Colonel-General, £4,800; for a Major-General, £5,000; for a Lieutenant-General, £5,200; for a Colonel-General, £5,400; for a Major-General, £5,600; for a Lieutenant-General, £5,800; for a Colonel-General, £6,000; for a Major-General, £6,200; for a Lieutenant-General, £6,400; 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